

Is Your Allergy Asthma?



Sneezy, sleepy, grumpy, wheezy, drippy, teary, stuffy--no it's not the seven dwarfs suffering from allergies—these are asthma symptoms. This is true particularly if any other symptoms include coughing, shortness of breath, dry mouth, chest tightness or trouble sleeping. Because asthma symptoms can be confused with allergies, this disease may not be diagnosed quickly. This delay can lead to trouble since untreated asthma can be life threatening and cause permanent lung damage.

Asthma in children is especially difficult to diagnosis because symptoms may be associated with allergies as well as other childhood illnesses such as colds, upper respiratory infections and bronchitis. If you suspect you or a child may have asthma, see your physician:

- Describe your medical history including
 - The frequency, duration and severity of symptoms
 - Family history of allergies, asthma, sinusitis and rhinitis
 - Environment and lifestyle such as smoking, housing conditions, diet and occupation
- Complete a Physical Exam including
 - Checking for inflammation of nose and sinuses, allergic skin conditions, nasal polyps
 - Listening for wheezing during normal breathing and with lung function tests
 - Other tests which may help the physician diagnose asthma

Your CIGNA Benefits include the Well Aware Program for Better Health Asthma Program®. If you or a family member has been diagnosed with asthma, call 1-800-894-0086 to enroll in this program and receive information and resources about this condition.

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